

Message Text

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DODE-00 CU-04 OES-07 EB-08 COME-00 EPA-01 DOE-11
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R 070650Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4083
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LENINGRAD 00718

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, EIND, UR
SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF CONGEN VISIT TO LITHUANIA

REF: LENINGRAD 0692 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT OF CONSUL GENERAL TO VILNIUS (FEB 26 - MAR 1) WAS MARKED BY APPARENT LOW-KEY EFFORT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR IMPATIENCE WITH U.S. NON-RECOGNITION POLICY TOWARD LITHUANIA. WHILE VILNIUS IS CERTAINLY MORE PROVINCIAL THAN TALLINN OR RIGA, LOCAL OFFICIALS REFLECTED STRONG NATIONAL PERSONALITY ON WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES: EDUCATION, RELIGION, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY. OF SINGLE GREATEST INTEREST WAS EVIDENCE THAT CATHOLIC CHURCH REMAINS VITAL AND EFFECTIVE CARRIER OF NATIONAL TRADITION (SEPTTEL). END SUMMARY.

2. AS REPORTED LENINGRAD 0692, "FOREIGN MINISTER" ZENKEVECIUS MAY HAVE SOUGHT AGAIN TO REGISTER HIS DISPLEASURE OVER U.S. NON-RECOGNITION POLICY BY SEEING THAT CONSUL GENERAL COULD NOT TRAVEL TO KAUNUS AND WAS NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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AFFORDED TRADITIONAL HOSPITALITY OF MEAL HOSTED BY CITY PLUS FREE THEATER TICKETS. ON OTHER HAND, MID OFFICIALS INDICATED THEY EXPECT CG WOULD "BE ABLE TO TRAVEL" ON NEXT VISIT, AND HE WAS ALLOWED THIS TIME TO DRIVE IN OWN CAR TO ANCIENT CAPITAL OF TRAKAI (30 KMS FROM VILNIUS).

3. WELL-CONNECTED LITHUANIAN-SPEAKING AMERICAN STUDENT IN

VILNIUS REPORTED BEING TOLD THERE IS SPLIT IN LITHUANIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD U.S. NON-RECOGNITION POLICY WITH SOME TOP LITHUANIAN OFFICIALS BELIEVING NATIONALIST INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED IF THEY COULD DEAL DIRECTLY WITH U.S., BUT MOST LITHUANIANS WANT U.S. TO "HANG-IN" WITH PRESENT POLICY.

4. NUMEROUS FACTS TESTIFIED TO PRESERVATION OF STRONG LITHUANIAN PERSONALITY:

-- ACCORDING DEPUTY MAYOR KACIONAS (MAYOR ALLEGEDLY SICK) PERCENTAGE OF LITHUANIANS IN VILNIUS (HISTORICALLY MIXED CITY) IS AT HIGHEST POINT (OVER 50 PERCENT). SOME 16 PERCENT ARE RUSSIAN. IN COUNTRY AS WHOLE, 81 PERCENT ARE LITHUANIAN, 8.5 PERCENT RUSSIAN AND 7.3 PERCENT POLISH.

-- VILNIUS UNIVERSITY PRO-RECTOR GRIGONIS GRINNED AS HE SAID ALL COURSES AND ENTRANCE EXAMS ARE IN LITHUANIAN EXCEPT FOR COURSES FOR SOME 115 RUSSIANS WHO STUDIED IN LITHUANIAN RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS AND COURSES GIVEN IN POLISH AT PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE TO TRAIN TEACHERS FOR POLISH-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS. SINCE SOME RUSSIANS GO TO UNIVERSITY "IN INTERIOR," PERCENTAGE AT UNIVERSITY IS LOWER THAN IN COUNTRY AS WHOLE. LITHUANIAN STUDENTS ARE SENT TO RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES, BASED ON THEIR LITHUANIAN RECORDS, IN THOSE CASES WHERE VILNIUS DOES NOT OFFER SPECIALIZED TRAINING, E.G., IN OIL PROCESSING OR NUCLEAR PHYSICS. THEY
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ALMOST ALWAYS RETURN TO LITHUANIAN TO WORK. VERY SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL LITERATURE REMAINS IN RUSSIAN.

-- OFFICIALS WERE ASKED WHY, GIVEN FACT LITHUANIA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION RATE WAS FASTER THAN IN MORE INDUSTRIALIZED BALTIC NEIGHBORS, IT WAS ABLE TO AVOID LARGE SLAV IMMIGRATION. THEY EXPLAINED THEY HAD MADE EDUCATION OF SPECIALISTS AN INTEGRAL PART OF INDUSTRIALIZATION PLANS, BENEFITTING FROM GENERALLY WELL-EDUCATED POPULATION.

--THERE HAS BEEN GREAT STRESS IN LITHUANIAN PRESS ON NEED TO USE EXCESS HUMAN RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY, AND OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED THAT ALL INCREASES IN PRODUCTION MUST COME FROM HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY PER CAPITA, NOT IMMIGRATION.

-- TRADITIONS DIE HARD IN COUNTRYSIDE. GOSPLAN DEPUTY DIRECTOR ZAYKAUSKAS SAID THAT, IN ORDER TO REGROUP SEPARATE PEASANT HOUSEHOLDS (KHUTORS) INTO MORE VIABLE VILLAGES (WITH SCHOOLS, STORES, ETC.) IT WAS NECESSARY TO BUILD INDIVIDUAL HOMES. PEASANTS WOULD NOT MOVE INTO APARTMENT HOUSES. AMERICAN STUDENT CLAIMED THERE ARE STILL UNCOLLECTIVIZED KHUTORS OFF BEATEN TRACK, SOMETIMES OWNED BY

SUCCESSFUL FARMERS WHO RETURNED TO LITHUANIA AFTER 1953 AMNESTY. GOSPLAN OFFICIAL SAID TWO-THIRDS OF FARMS ARE COLLECTIVIZED BUT SOVKHOZ AND GOSKHOZ (SPECIALIZED SOVKHOZ) WORK SOMEWHAT MORE LAND THAN DO KOLKHOZES. EVERYONE HAS PRIVATE PLOT.

-- VISIT TO CROWDED SUNDAY CATHOLIC SERVICES AND FRANK DISCUSSION WITH VILNIUS CATHOLIC PRIMATE KRIVAITIS CONFIRMED AMERICAN STUDENT'S DESCRIPTION OF EXTENT TO WHICH

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SOE-02 EPA-01 /105 W
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R 070650Z MAR 78
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 LENINGRAD 00718

CHURCH REMAINS CARRIER OF TRADITION, EVEN AMONG NON-BELIEVERS. SLIGHTLY IMPROVING POSITION OF CHURCH IS SUBJECT SEPTEL.

-- PERHAPS BECAUSE OF STRONG LOCAL NATIONALISM, CULTURAL WATCHDOGS KEEP TIGHT REIN ON WHAT IS PRODUCED. AMERICAN STUDENT REPORTS THAT TWO PLAYS WERE CLOSED THIS WINTER, ONE LITHUANIAN, ONE RUSSIAN. LITHUANIAN HISTORICAL PLAY ENDED WITH STRESS ON WORD "LITHUANIA," WHICH AUDIENCE THEN CHANTED.

4. APART FROM MORE OBVIOUS NATIONALIST ISSUES, FOLLOWING WERE AMONG MORE INTERESTING DETAILS.

-- EXPENSIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD VILNIUS IS PROCEEDING WITHOUT OUTSIDE SPECIALIST ASSISTANCE ALONGSIDE DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGINATIVELY DESIGNED MODERN SUBURBS. BEYOND LIE GREEN PARK-BELT AND THEN AREA FOR DACHAS, SANI-

TORIA, ETC. WATER IS PIPED 20 KMS FROM ARTESIAN WELLS
BUT, PENDING COMPLETION OF SEWAGE PLANT, RAW WASTE IS
FLUSHED DOWNSTREAM INTO RIVERS AND ADJOINING LAKES.
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-- CITY OF 460,000 (55 PERCENT WOMEN) IS GROWING BY
12,000 PER YEAR AND WILL CERTAINLY BREAK ITS SELF-IMPOSED
500,000 CEILING. ITS MAJOR PROBLEMS ARE TRANSPORTATION AND
MANPOWER FOR CONSTRUCTION. WITH 50 PRIVATE CARS PER 1,000
INHABITANTS, CITY IS BATTLING OVER ISSUE OF BUILDING AN

UNDERGROUND GARAGE IN OLD CITY. IT CAN GARAGE 45 PERCENT
OF PRIVATE CARS IN NEW SUBURBS.

-- ASKED ABOUT BALTIC HIGHWAY, OFFICIALS SAID 100 KMS
OF RIGA-VILNIUS ARTERY HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN LITHUANIA AS
PART OF HIGHWAY TO RUN FROM FINLAND THROUGH RIGA, VILNIUS,
WARSAW AND EVENTUALLY ROME (SIC). THEY KNEW OF NO PRESENT
PLANS TO CONTINUE HIGHWAY ALONG LITHUANIAN COASTLINE UP TO
GDR.

-- GOSPLAN OFFICIAL EXPECTED URBAN POPULATION TO
INCREASE FROM PRESENT 58.4 TO 65-70 PERCENT BY 1990 WITH
CORRESPONDING IMPACT ON THE MAIN SOURCES OF NATIONAL INCOME.
(ACCORDING PRESS, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION EQUALLED 2.69
MILLION RUBLES IN 1977, WHEREAS INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION
TOTALLED 7.6 BILLION RUBLES IN 1975 PRICES.)

-- IN DISCUSSING ANNUAL PLAN, GOSPLAN DESCRIBED
LOWERING OF FISHING QUOTAS IN BALTIC AS "UNPLEASANT SUR-
PRISE" WHICH HAD SERIOUSLY DISLOCATED 5-YEAR PLAN.

-- IN ENERGY FIELD, GOSPLAN DESCRIBED OIL PIPED INTO
LITHUANIA FROM RSFSR AS MAJOR SOURCE OF FUEL FOR FACTORIES.
GAS IS PRESENTLY USED FOR CITY HEATING. NEW POWER PLANT
BEING BUILT IN ELECTREINAY (ON RIVER BETWEEN VILNIUS AND
KAUNUS) WILL BE MAJOR SOURCE OF ELECTRIC ENERGY. LITHUANIA
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WON OUT OVER LATVIA AND SOME LOCAL ENVIROMENTAL CONCERN AS
LOCATION FOR NEXT BALTIC ATOMIC POWER PLANT TO SERVE BYELO-
RUSSIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA. DESPITE EMPHASIS IN PRESS
ON NEED TO SAVE ELECTRIC ENERGY AND METAL, ONLY STRICTLY
ECONOMY MEASURE CITY AUTHORITIES COULD NAME WAS TURNING OFF
EVERY SECOND STREET LIGHT ON SECONDARY ROADS IN VILNIUS.

-- IN TERMS OF NEW INDUSTRIES, GOSPLAN OFFICIAL
REFERRED TO OIL REFINERY AND ACKNOWLEDGED EXISTENCE OF OIL
RESOURCES OFF LITHUANIAN COAST BUT SAID THEY ARE PRESENTLY
NOT WORTH EXPLOITING.

-- LITHUANIAN PRESS HAS STRESSED EXTENT TO WHICH E.G.
EVERY SECOND PLANT IN VILNIUS HAS OVER-COMPLEMENT NUMBER
OF WORKERS WHILE THERE IS A LABOR SHORTAGE IN OTHER AREAS.
WHEN PRESSED ON POINT, GOSPLAN OFFICIAL INDICATED "NO
DRACONIAN" MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN TO COMPEL PLANTS TO
DROP WORKERS. INSTEAD, SOME PLANTS MIGHT INCREASE SHIFTS.
FURNITURE FACTORY OF 2,000 HAD 15 EXCESS WORKERS WHICH IT
ALSO PLANNED TO ABSORB.

-- FURNITURE PLANT DIRECTOR SAID YOUTH TODAY IS BETTER
EDUCATED, DOES NOT WANT TO DO MANUAL LABOR (COMPELLING MORE
AUTOMATION), IS LESS INTERESTED IN GOOD SALARY THAN
FORMERLY, BUT WANTS TO KNOW ALL ABOUT WORK CONDITIONS,
SPORT AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, ETC., BEFORE ACCEPTING
EMPLOYMENT. IN 1977, PLANT RETAINED 60 PERCENT OF 2.5
MILLION RUBLE PROFIT, GIVING 40 PERCENT TO STATE. THIS
DESPITE HAVING TO PRODUCE 20,000 CHAIRS AT STATE-IMPOSED
PRICE WHICH MEANT 1 RUBLE LOSS PER CHAIR.

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R 070650Z MAR 78
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 LENINGRAD 00718

OUTSKIRTS OF CITY, RETAINING ONLY HISTORIC LIBRARY, HUMAN-

ITY FACULTIES AND ADMINISTRATION IN OLD CITY. THERE ARE PRESENTLY 23 FOREIGN STUDENTS INCLUDING 3 AMERICANS. EXCHANGE AGREEMENT IS BEING NEGOTIATED WITH KENT STATE (WHICH HAS LITHUANIAN-BACKGROUND TEACHERS). CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSITY WILL TAKE PLACE IN FALL 1979, RATHER THAN APRIL 1 ANNIVERSARY, TO ALLOW EXTENSIVE RENOVATION OF OLD BUILDINGS. (COMMENT: WE HOPE APPROPRIATE GIFT CAN BE ARRANGED FROM U.S. PRIVATE IF NOT OFFICIAL SOURCES).

5. CG PRESENTED LITHUANIAN REPRESENTATION LIST TO OVIR CHIEF KISYALYAVICHUS, WHO PROMISED TO LET US KNOW STATUS OF ALL CASES. EMBASSY MOSCOW IS IN BETTER POSITION TO EVALUATE HIS CLAIM THAT 90 PERCENT OF REQUESTS TO VISIT RELATIVES IN U.S. ARE GRANTED. BUCHANAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, REPORTS, VISITS, CONSULS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LENING00718
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780101-0982
Format: TEL
From: LENINGRAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780398/aaaadfiq.tel
Line Count: 292
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 27cf32cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LENINGRAD 692
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3419518
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHLIGHTS OF CONGEN VISIT TO LITHUANIA
TAGS: PDEV, EIND, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/27cf32cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014